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PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION
& EDUCATION

CHRISTIANITY and CRISIS

A Christian Journal of Opinion

A Roman Catholic for President?*

The issue raised by the possibility of a Roman Catholic candidate for the Presidency is the most significant immediate problem that grows out of the confrontation of Roman Catholicism with other religious communities in the United States. There are a great many Protestants of influence who are inclined to say that they would never vote for a Roman Catholic for President. Many of them refuse to say this with finality, but there is a strong trend in this direction. Our guess is that it may be stronger among the clergy and among official Protestant spokesmen than among the laity.

Aside from crude forms of prejudice and a reluctance to accept the fact that this is no longer a Protestant country, there are two considerations behind this position that have some substance. The first is that the traditional teaching of the Catholic Church is at variance with American conceptions of religious liberty and of church-state relations. There is a fear that a Catholic President might be used by a politically powerful Catholic Church to give that church the preferred position to which, according to its tradition, it believes itself entitled.

The other consideration is that there are a few specific issues on which there is a Catholic position and, short of any basic change in our institutions, the nation's legislation and policy might be deflected by a Catholic President toward these known positions of his church. One example that

is not often mentioned is the intransigent view of the problems of the Cold War that was expressed in the American Catholic Bishops' statement late in 1959. (We would not vote for any man, Protestant or Catholic, who takes such a view.)

On matters of this kind most Catholics are more likely to be affected by the position taken by the authorities of their church than would a Protestant. Even though they may not agree with the bishops, it would be embarrassing to oppose them publicly. Catholic bishops do their debating privately; American Catholicism on the hierarchical level, therefore, gives the impression of a united front that no Protestant churches are able to give.

We want to direct three comments to those who take a negative view concerning a possible Roman Catholic President:

(1) If the American people should make it clear that a Catholic could never be elected President, this would be an affront to 39,500,000 of our fellow-citizens, and it would suggest that full participation in American political life is denied to them as Catholics. This would be true even though Catholics are governors, senators, congressmen, and Supreme Court justices. We believe that this situation would wound our common life and damage our institutions more grievously than it would be possible for a Catholic President to do even if he chose to. We are shocked that so many Protestants seem unwilling to give any weight to this.

(2) We are justified in ascertaining what view of church-state relations and of the basis of religious liberty a particular Catholic candidate holds. We may learn this without grilling him, for his record

* This editorial is written in the hope that it will help clear the air insofar as the general principles at stake are concerned; it is not intended to indicate support for any candidates.

of public service and its implications would be an open book.

There are two main views of religious liberty that are held among Catholics. The traditional view regards as normative the idea of a Catholic state with the church in a privileged position and with at least a curtailment of the liberties of non-Catholics. This view is an inheritance from an earlier period of history, and many Catholic theologians and ecclesiastical leaders now reject it. They believe in religious liberty for non-Catholics on principle and not merely as a matter of pragmatic adjustment to the American situation.

This more liberal view is not limited to this country; it is held widely in Western Europe. It is one view held in Vatican circles. Those who hold this view believe that Pius XII was at least open to it, and they are even more sure that this is true of his generous-minded successor.

In emphasizing the importance of ascertaining the Catholic candidate's views on these matters, we are supporting a contention of Bishop James Pike in his *Life* article (Dec. 21, 1959). We are sorry that he seemed to suggest that American Catholics were arrayed against Catholics elsewhere and against the Pope.

The Roman Catholic world is divided from top to bottom on the question of the basis of religious liberty, whether it is to be accepted only pragmatically in a pluralistic country or whether it should be defended on Christian principle, even in situations in which the church has the power, through its influence on the electorate, to impose its will on the state.

The American laity are emphatically on the side of the more liberal interpretation. It is quite certain that any Catholic layman who reaches the point where he can be considered a likely candidate for President will be sufficiently influenced by the democratic ethos to represent that position. This was true of Alfred E. Smith as it is true of Senator Kennedy. But anyone who is troubled about this matter is justified in asking where a Catholic candidate stands on this question.

We believe that it is quite possible that a Catholic in the Presidency who is himself liberal on this matter and who is sophisticated enough to know what is happening in the church might be better able to deal with Catholic pressures than a Protestant. He would be in a better position to measure them and to appeal from one part of the church to another.

(3) So far as the specific issues on which there is a known Catholic position are concerned, there are very few that come to the desk of the President. More of them are dealt with by mayors and governors, and the Republic has survived many Catholic mayors and governors. And on many issues within the purview of the President, the Catholic community is divided even, for example, on the appointment of an ambassador to the Vatican. (It was a Baptist who made the latest appointment to the Vatican.) Furthermore, a President is subjected to so many pressures and counterpressures that he is less vulnerable to any one form of pressure than most other public servants.

There is the vexing problem of birth control. As a domestic problem it belongs chiefly to the states, and it is fortunate that many Catholics, while they do not reject their church's position on birth control in terms of morals and theology, do not believe there should be a civil law that imposes the Catholic moral teaching upon non-Catholics. As one element in a program of foreign aid, this may belong to the President's province. (We may say in passing that President Eisenhower has gone as far as the Catholic authorities in rejecting its inclusion in governmental programs.

Among the various alternatives open to a Catholic President, Father John R. Connery, S.J., suggests in *America* (Dec. 12, 1959) that the President could allow a foreign aid bill, of which he basically approved but which included financial provision for a birth control program, to become law by ignoring it for ten days. This procedure presupposes that there would be in his mind a conflict between his religiously directed conscience on a specific point and his broader judgment as to what was good policy.

There is general agreement that this country should not urge on another country a birth control program but that it should cooperate with a country that desires it. The birth control feature of a broader program of economic development could be paid for by the government of the aided country while the United States Government would support the program as a whole. This merely suggests a possibility that might enable a Catholic President to handle this issue constructively.

However, it must be noted that the issue of birth control must be weighed along with all the other issues that are at stake in an election. Even if a Catholic candidate were to take a line here that we might regret, this would not necessarily

outweigh all the other considerations of which we need to take account. Furthermore, we do not know what line a Catholic President would take in a complicated situation, for Catholic moral theology gives a high place to the virtue of prudence.

We should like to add to these considerations a more positive note: a Catholic President who is well instructed in the moral teachings of his church would have certain assets. (It is chiefly in the areas of sex and medicine that the Protestant finds elements of an intolerable legalism in Catholic moral teaching.) If he is of an essentially liberal spirit he may absorb the best in the real humanism of Catholic thought.

A Catholic President might have a better perspective on the issue of social justice than many Protestants. He might be guided by the ethical inhibitions present in Catholic views of the just war so as to resist the temptation to make military necessity paramount in all matters of national strategy. He might have a wiser and more seasoned understanding of the claims of the person in relation to the community than many a one-sided Protestant individualist.

We are not now speaking of any particular Catholic candidate, and there are elements in Catholic moral doctrine that we reject. When these are interpreted by the narrower type of ecclesiastic, we often find them repellent. But Catholic teaching has its better and more humane side, and it is the repository of much wisdom that could stand a Catholic President in good stead. J. C. B.

PATHOS IN THE ALGERIAN CONFLICT

A SAGE OBSERVER of the French political scene has noted: "the crisis in Algeria reflects the epic proportions of a Shakespearean tragedy." It is the classic case of a clash between two groups, each with legitimate social and political interests and neither holding a monopoly of right or wrong.

If one side were inescapably the wrongdoer and the other fully exemplified justice, the problem would be a legal one susceptible to judicial procedures. Unhappily the Algerian conflict, as with many disputes in the anarchic international realm, is primarily a political problem for which a political solution must be found. Neither law nor any simple formula of justice is readily available to restore peace and order to the troubled North African area.

Until the recent uprising of the French settlers, two groups had been critical of General de Gaulle's North African policy: (1) the majority of the Arab

nationalists, and (2) liberal reform groups in France. The Arab nationalists consider the measures taken thus far to be insufficient to the goals of independence and self-government. Some of them privately confess that the present French Government has gone far to meet their claims, but they can ill-afford to acknowledge this publicly.

Meanwhile, the liberal reform elements surrounding leaders like Mendes France indict de Gaulle for not moving far enough while his popularity in metropolitan France has been at its height. They question whether de Gaulle's freedom of action will increase and argue that time may be running out. By implication, both groups assume that the French settlers and the French Army lack sufficient power to impede constructive policies if French leadership acts to put them into effect. Recent events suggest that both groups may underestimate the stubborn and intractable character of those forces with which the French Government must contend.

The Army is a postwar phenomenon that stands at the center of every French policy whether for NATO, North Africa or Southeast Asia. For twenty years this Army has experienced a succession of setbacks; it is a body of men with a steady diet of defeat and frustration. It can no longer believe fully in itself, for its history is one of capitulation in Europe, ill-fated adventures in Indo-China, and disparagement around the world.

Embittered and disillusioned, the bulk of the Army is making a last stand in the final French colonial outpost. The elite troops, especially the paratroopers, are pledged to recover past glory on the battlefields of Algeria. Here they are driven by the forces of history to identify with extremist groups among whom they can live and whom they defend. Even loyalty to the single most successful French general is hardly powerful enough to quench the emotions bred by two decades of retreat and embarrassment.

Nor can French policy afford to override the claims and anxieties of the French settlers. Rightly or wrongly, over a million Frenchmen in Algeria see themselves as the rightful heirs of the key centers of Algeria. They can point to economic development and social and cultural attainments. Their roots are in the soil; for many, Algeria is the only homeland.

General de Gaulle can undoubtedly persuade, beguile and even coerce the French population to a degree. But with an Army of doubtful loyalty, he must move within narrow limits. The instruments of government which traditionally in-

clude a monopoly over the means of violence are lacking. French authority in Algeria is hedged in by restrictions that may eventually yield to strong leadership from Paris or to the inevitability of history. But an immediate solution in the form of an imposed settlement is difficult to envisage.

Yet without such a solution, France can expect only a continued weakening of its position, a deterioration of its status in the eyes of the world and an incapacity to meet its domestic and international responsibilities. General de Gaulle must act even though he may know that he cannot act decisively. France must carry forward a policy of pacification, of economic and social reform, and of negotiation with the so-called rebels.

Pacification, however, cannot provide for the triumph of either side. Economic reforms must be undertaken aware that the F.L.N. will, in the long run, accept nothing short of self-determination; negotiations must continue through the cumbersome machinery of third parties.

American Culture and Campus Culture

IN HIS very discerning article, "Faith and Morals on the College Campus," (*C & C*, Sept. 21, 1959) Waldo Beach focused attention on the moral image of the contemporary college student. A fairly distinct portrait is emerging as a result of the steady stream of studies of campus life that began several years ago. Many of the features of this new profile are not too flattering. As Beach summarized it:

In the "flat" universe of the undergraduate, when horizontal "other-directed" loyalties obliterate vertical and "inner-directed" ones, the character-structure that results is not unnaturally one that is smooth, affable, conventional, long on adaptability but short on inner integrity when no one is watching.

In suggesting a strategy for coping with this new and baffling posture on the part of the student of today, Beach warned that one speaking in the name of the Christian faith will get a poor hearing if he concentrates on how unflattering this new moral image of the student is. Yet students are as responsive to good "theologizing" as they are resistant to extended "moralizing."

Such an awakening of interest in theological questions on the part of college students may well

Political realism is called for, but the servants of realism are seldom praised for their difficult tasks. This suggests the final pathos in the Algerian crisis. To achieve success General de Gaulle must retain the authority of a popular leader. Yet his task will, in all probability, lead to a decline of his political strength in some of the crucial groups with which he must work. The residual confidence he enjoys with the Army, the French settlers, the Algerian nationalists and in France itself may ebb away before he has accomplished his task.

If de Gaulle should fail, would the Fifth Republic fall, and with its fall would the prospect of stability and order in Europe and North Africa disappear? This is the fateful prospect that hangs as a brooding cloud over Algeria. Who can say whether some fatal flaw in the tragic web of relationships may carry France over the abyss, or whether at the eleventh hour a proud and solitary statesman may yet succeed?

K. W. T.

WILLIAM KIRKLAND

bear both intellectual and moral fruit. Beach suggested that this dawning grasp of the inner content of the Christian faith should provide a context in which their otherwise fragmented courses of study may be unified; and also that a growing awareness of the moral stringency of the holy should lead to a renewal of the sense of moral responsibility in the student himself.

Anyone who has worked on the college campus in recent years would, I am sure, be in hearty agreement with the main thrust of this evaluation. Yet in the effort to address the "careful" young men and women who inhabit the campus today, there is another emphasis that might well complement the more formal approach of theological elucidation. This interest might be described as *the concerted effort to identify and understand the dominant features of our contemporary American culture*, in which we all "live and move"; *to identify and understand the leading motifs in the "student culture,"* in which the student is immediately involved (if not immersed); *and to probe more deeply into the relation between the two.*

Such a two-pronged cultural analysis has been going on already in many campus Christian groups, and it seems promising enough to spotlight for special consideration. Beach mentioned the growing familiarity of college students with the writ-

Mr. Kirkland, who teaches Christian Ethics at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, has appeared on the "Look Up and Live" television program several times to discuss various aspects of the younger generation.

ings of such men as Kierkegaard, Kafka and Bonhoeffer. The social scientists on the American scene today are actually documenting many of the trends in our society that these and other varieties of existentialist writers were prophesying years ago.

This effort at self-recognition would seek to help the student study, question and reflect critically upon the growing body of current studies of the college student. More than this, it would seek to place this study in the broader context of the even more numerous studies of the "social character" of the American people at large, images and portraits that have been piling up at an increasing rate during the past decade.

The students would be encouraged to study critically the writings of Philip E. Jacob, John E. Smith, Allen Barton, Max Wise, Edward D. Eddy (a few of the analysts, and critics of analysts, of today's college students). In some places the earlier studies have probably been "talked out." One is continually surprised to find, however, that on some college campuses the content of these evaluations is scarcely known.

At the same time, the student would also be engaged in the same kind of intensive investigation of the "images" of contemporary American man to be found in the writings of David Riesman, C. Wright Mills, Erich Fromm, Louis Kronenberger, Will Herberg, William H. Whyte, Jr., Vance Packard, Max Lerner, David Potter, Daniel R. Miller and Guy E. Swanson (to mention just a few of the growing legion of interpreters of American culture). If one is discouraged by the length of this list, there is some consolation in the fact that no matter where these various interpreters take a slice out of our culture for analysis, the veins of the same problems are likely to be exposed.

Children of the "New America"

Let us examine first the pertinence of probing the inner structure of our American culture as a part of the theological task of engaging the college student in lively dialogue today. To put it conservatively, such an inquiry will alert the student to the probability that there is a basic shift taking place in the key values by which most Americans make their day-to-day decisions, a basic change in the constellation of personality features that typify many Americans in certain areas of their observable behavior. Further, there is the likelihood that these changes in the social character of our people are in some subtle but crucial ways related to the tempestuous cross-currents of change and revolution

that are making over the face and shape of American society.

Today's college students are children of the "New America" in a sense in which none of us in the older generation is. They have lived practically all their lives not only with the fall-out of radiation and strontium in the physical environment, but also in a social atmosphere filled with the "fall-out" of fear—fear of massive violence and human extinction. No other generation in history has had to coexist with the threat of chaos on such a massive scale. They have known only the America of the post-World War II era, the America that has for the first time in her history become deeply involved (almost against her will) in the power conflicts of the world.

Yet the students of today are also the children of the "New America" in a quite contrasting sense. Ironically, this is the first generation to grow up in the midst of opulence and affluence, a society characterized by unprecedented abundance and leisure; they do not remember the Depression. In terms of money, conveniences, comforts and luxuries, no other generation ever "had it so good." Within their own lifespan (to expand slightly on Riesman's characterization), the psychology and ethic of the bank account and the cash payment have been countered if not surpassed by the psychology and ethic of the expense account and the credit card.

These ironic facets of the "New America" have been vividly portrayed in Reinhold Niebuhr's oft-quoted statement that our land is now a "gadget-filled paradise suspended in a hell of international insecurity." The effects of this irony of the "New America" are undoubtedly "writ large" in the hearts and minds of the current collegians.

The implications are clear, then, for those concerned with making an authentic Christian witness to the college students of today. We need to use all the imagination at our disposal to alert them to the tidal forces beating in upon us all, to the new directions in which our culture seems to be moving, to the subtlety and hiddenness of many of the new personality-shaping powers at work.

Our mass culture has many new and potent instruments at its command, making it possible for its core values to be communicated with tremendous effectiveness (where is there a "hiding place" from the new "story-tellers"?). The less we are aware of the peculiar potency of these forces, the more vulnerable we are to them, the more we surrender to them the power to shape us in their own image, the more we run the danger of allowing

ourselves to become only slight variations of the new style American, described by C. Wright Mills as "the cheerful, amiable robot."

The "Fixer"

If one is inclined to think that this is an exaggeration of the uniformity and the potency of the main thrust of our culture, the words of Philip Jacob in his much-discussed study, *Changing Values in College*, should at least be considered. In opening his artful, if controversial, "profile of the values of American college students," Jacob says:

The values of American college students are remarkably homogeneous, considering the variety of their social, economic, ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds, and the relatively unrestricted opportunities they have had for freedom of thought and personal development. (p. 1)

In elaboration, Jacob makes the point even more explicit:

American college students today tend to think alike, feel alike and believe alike. To an extraordinary degree, their values are the same wherever they may be studying and whatever the stage of their college careers. The great majority seem turned out of a common mold, so far as outlook on life and standards of conduct are concerned. (p. 12)

This suggests, of course, that before the students get to college, certain influences in our culture have effectively gotten to them. The decisive value-orientation has probably already been made. In the face of this, the college seems in most cases to be able to do precious little about effecting any basic changes in these core values. This ineffectiveness of the college has probably been due in part to the excessively rationalistic assumptions underlying the claims of much of modern higher education; and also to the fact that the power and pervasiveness of the dynamic forces operating at the center of our culture have been little understood and sorely underestimated.

C. Wright Mills identifies the elaborate marketing apparatus of our expanding economic system as the most influential agency in our American society:

Shaped by an ethos according to which all objects and qualities of life are transient commodities, it [the marketing apparatus] would transform the human being into the ultimately saturated man—the cheerful robot—and make "anxious obsolescence" the American way of life. There is inherent in this mecha-

nism no social purpose to balance its great social power; no built-in responsibility to anybody except to the man who makes the profit. And yet there is little doubt that this mechanism is now a leading fixer of the real values of the overdeveloped society . . . and probably—in character-building influence—more important than school, the church, and even the home, which it has so intimately invaded. (*Social Progress*, 1959, October, p. 10)

Mills' use of the word "fixer" in describing the influence of the marketing apparatus on our values has an unintended appropriateness in the light of the recent TV quiz show riggings; and the widening investigations of the prevalence of "payola" and the pricing policies in the sale of drugs would seem to provide further evidence in support of his thesis.

These are some of the facets of contemporary culture that point to the appropriateness of inviting collegians to become serious and involved (not merely academic) students of this culture. They can start in their own major field; from this orientation they can trace the lines of relation between it and the larger culture, always viewing it under the omnipresent sway of the new dynamic and direction of this culture. They will be limited, restrained, perhaps coerced, in ways they should begin to assess as soon as possible.

The objection may be raised that this is too big a task for anyone except the specialist, that American culture is too vast and complex for synoptic understanding. The task is almost an impossible one. To become dilettantes is perhaps the best we can hope for. But if it will bring us a little closer to seeing something of the uniformity of our contemporary culture and the massive impact it is making upon the lives of all of us, such *dilettantism* will serve a strategic function.

Bonhoeffer's words are worth much pondering: "Sociologically speaking, pertinent action will be most effectively ensured by a sound balance of specialism and dilettantism." Perhaps this is what is called for: the courage to be dilettantes in the study of our culture, in the hope that this will lead to deeper self-understanding, and thence to more "pertinent action."

A second place where the student can search for greater awareness is a little closer to home. As he is becoming more knowledgeable about his involvement in the larger American culture, he can be doing the same thing with the local campus culture. The two tasks are really complementary, illuminating one another. By "campus culture" we refer to the student culture on the local campus.

The Second Curriculum

Perhaps the most extensive and exhaustive study of any student culture yet attempted has been going on at Vassar College for about a decade. Financed by a grant from the Mellon Foundation, the analysis has been carried on by a team of psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists. Director of the research program is Dr. Nevitt Sanford, a psychologist. He defines the "student culture" as "a pattern of values, attitudes, ideas, way of looking at things, rules of conduct and the like, which prevails among the students at a college at a particular time." It has a kind of independent existence of its own, says Sanford, and it makes up the central core of values and attitudes to which the students' academic experiences are assimilated.

Now, why should this task of analyzing and appraising the campus culture be carried on simultaneously with the study of American culture? We suggest three reasons for this two-fold inquiry. (1) The campus culture is described by Dr. Sanford as the "prime educational force at work" for the greater number of students on the Vassar campus. In suggesting its power in the lives of the students, Sanford says that they use it as a constant reference and guide in forming their own attitudes on matters ranging from getting along with their fellow students to life-work, marriage and the world itself.

In other places, this culture has been described as "The Second Curriculum," and the clear conclusion drawn is that it is far more potent in influencing basic attitudes than is the first or formal curriculum. As one college professor has summarized it:

The Second Curriculum is that odd mixture of status hunger, voodoo, tradition, lust, stereotyped dissipation, love, solid achievement, and plain good fun sometimes called "college life." It drives a high proportion of our students through college chronically short of sleep, behind in their work, and uncertain of the exact score in any department of life. (*Saturday Evening Post*, March 7, 1959, p. 44)

(2) The student himself needs to cock a critical eye at his local campus culture because it is, again in Sanford's words, "the greatest obstacle" to the accomplishment of the educational aims of the college. Why is this so? As Sanford explains it: "One of the main functions of the student culture is to keep the faculty at a respectful distance. It serves as a shield to prevent any deep involvements with courses, ideas, or any adult relationship with faculty members." Another member of the research

group at Vassar, Dr. Mervin Freedman, says, "It even offers instruction in . . . how to bring pressure that will insure that the faculty behaves in expected and therefore manageable ways."

It should be specifically noted that these discoveries were made on a campus noted for high academic standards, where the researchers themselves found among the students a healthy respect for academic responsibilities. And even after we make due allowances for the unique features of this particular campus, there is enough plausibility in these findings about the campus culture to warrant their being tested with regard to any local campus. If the campus culture is the chief obstacle to the realization of the educational aims of the college, is it not also likely to be a viable competitor to the Christian image of man and community?

(3) To what extent is this culture merely a reflection of the prevailing, predominant values and attitudes of our larger American culture? To what extent is the "Second Curriculum" like a collegiate version of the prevailing values in American society itself? As we should expect, Jacob and Wise, as well as other interpreters, find a large degree of correspondence. But the general picture of today's students may or may not accurately reflect what is true on any particular campus, as Jacob's special consideration of the "peculiar potency" of some colleges indicates.

The fruitfulness of such an inquiry into the content of the local campus culture will depend in large part upon whether the evaluation is made with rigorous honesty and candor. What must be sought by the student are not only the good reasons for students' thinking and acting the way they do, but the real reasons as far as possible. And no aspect of campus life should be left out of this critical examination.

Here is just one more point at which this overall exercise in culture analysis would go hand-in-hand with the simultaneous lively exposition of the Christian faith of which Beach speaks. The manifold liberating effects of the experience of justification by faith, together with an understanding of the "built-in principle" of judgment and criticism that is felt first of all within the Christian and the Christian community, should lead directly into this kind of personal examination and reflection.

There is no guarantee, of course, that this growing cultural awareness and self-understanding will prove, by itself, to be even the remotest kind of "tutor unto Christ." On one campus I visited recently, three students, after considering the pres-

ent cultural situation, independently expressed one common sentiment: "Well, this may be the way things are, but I still want to be one of the stereotypes. It's the only way I'll make the money to have the things I want." Credit these collegians with candor, at any rate. And they may have been saying what many more were thinking.

Fortunately, theirs is not the only response that is forthcoming. Where a critical and reflective cultural inquiry is carried on *in concert* with the probing theological discussions on which Beach reports, a deepening of the spiritual life, and a renewal and an *illumination* of the moral life of some students should not be surprising.

And in this process, all who are involved will be able to discern more clearly the mutually complementary roles of the Christian community and the academic community as the two institutions in our society that are called by their very charter to be both culture-transcending and culture-judging.

CORRESPONDENCE

Roman Catholics and Birth Control

TO THE EDITORS: We Roman Catholics make two important procedural errors in our approach to what should be a spirited but friendly dialogue with our Protestant neighbors on the question of birth control.

Our first mistake is to dismiss the moral posture of our antagonists as a camouflage for sensualism, or as evidence of their unconcern with the trans-earthly problem of populating heaven. We must, in other words, admit the possibility that they are

arguing on *moral ground* different from ours, but no less certain for them. Because they do not accept our present understanding of the "Natural Law," nor the difference we claim to exist between natural rhythm and artificial contraception, we must not conclude that their position is not one of genuine moral conviction. If we can assert that our tax money should not be used to support what we regard as immoral, they can also say that they are morally offended by the *withholding* of their tax money for the dissemination of birth control information. Protestant theologians mean it when they say that family planning, with whatever contraceptives that are necessary for this, is the *moral responsibility* of every Christian....

Secondly, we Catholics must remember that there have been serious variations in the history of our church's teaching on moral questions related to sex and marriage. Catholic historians, such as Father H. Davis, S.J., and Father E. C. Messenger, have related the fact that for over twelve centuries the general teaching of the church was that sexual intercourse between married persons became sinful once the woman had conceived. Procreation alone was the purpose and justification of sex. . . . that this position has changed should remind us that the "Natural Law" is not easy to understand, and that the present position of Catholic theologians may someday change.... We Catholics must not believe that in defending our church's position on birth control we are defending the entire body of Catholic doctrine.

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